



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL
GREG ABBOTT

August 21, 2003

Ms. Kelly S. Ripley
Records Management Coordinator
City of Irving
305 North O'Connor Road
Irving, Texas 75061

OR2003-5880

Dear Ms. Ripley:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 186354.

The Irving Police Department (the "department") received a request for all records related to the arrest of a named individual on specified dates. You state that some information has been released to the requestor. You claim that the department may refuse to comply with the request pursuant to section 552.028 of the Government Code, or alternatively, that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.028 of the Government Code provides:

- (a) A governmental body is not required to accept or comply with a request for information from:
 - (1) an individual who is imprisoned or confined in a correctional facility; or
 - (2) an agent of that individual, other than that individual's attorney when the attorney is requesting information that is subject to disclosure under this chapter.

(b) This section does not prohibit a governmental body from disclosing to an individual described by Subsection (a)(1), or that individual's agent, information held by the governmental body pertaining to that individual.

Gov't Code § 552.028. You assert that the request for information "was submitted by an agent of a confined person." Whether an individual is acting as an agent of an imprisoned individual is a factual determination that this office cannot make in the open records process. Consequently, we must rely on the representations of the governmental body requesting our opinion. Open Records Decision Nos. 554 (1990), 552 (1990). Based upon your representation, we conclude that the provisions of section 552.028 of the Government Code govern your request. Because the individual requesting the information is an agent of an individual imprisoned in a correctional facility, the Public Information Act (the "Act") gives the department the discretion to either "comply with" this open records request or deny it in its entirety.¹

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records;

¹ As we are able to resolve your request under section 552.028, we do not reach your other arguments.

2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877)673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512)475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/jh

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Enc. Submitted documents

**c: Mr. Frank M. Aldaco
5000 Mill Creek Trail
Fort Worth, Texas 76179
(w/o enclosures)**